

# University Studies – Intermediate Writing Proposal

Sociology, Anthropology, Crime and Justice Studies

November 2012

## **COURSE OVERVIEW OF SOC/ANT 316 RESEARCH METHODS**

This course is required of all majors and minors and introduces students to the basic concepts and skills of conducting social science research. By carrying out a semester-long research project, thinking through relevant readings, and engaging in class discussions, students will experience the excitement, opportunities, and challenges of investigating the social world and gain the ability to carry out their own research and critically assess the research of others.

## **COURSE-SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Students are expected to demonstrate the following:

- **Basic social scientific literacy**
  - Understanding of social scientific presentation of research
  - skills in being a critical “consumer” of social scientific research
- **Critical understanding of epistemological arguments about the production of knowledge**
  - critical understanding of claims to knowledge and authority and assumptions about the nature of “facts” and “objectivity”
  - understanding of connections between theoretical paradigms and research methodologies
- **Well-founded understanding of the mixed-method research process;**
  - ability to conceptualize social scientific inquiry and design and carry out a mixed-method social scientific research project
  - critical understanding of how to use different methodologies in complementary ways
  - awareness of ethics and politics of social scientific research
- **Basic skills in qualitative (e.g. participant observation, interviewing, visual & content observation) and quantitative (e.g. survey questionnaires) research methodologies;**
- **Basic competence in analyzing qualitative and quantitative research data;**
  - Qualitative: interpretation & discovering patterns in non-numeric data
  - Quantitative: descriptive statistics and quantification of data including frequency distributions, measures of central tendency (mean, median mode), constructing and reading bivariate tables.
- **Skill in presenting research results to different audiences through written and oral means.**

## **UNIVERSITY STUDIES LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- **Read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate written work in discipline-specific contexts**
- **Demonstrate rhetorically effective, discipline-specific writing for appropriate audiences**
- **Demonstrate, at an advanced level of competence, use of discipline-specific control of language, modes of development and formal conventions**
- **Demonstrate intermediate information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.**

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**INTERMEDIATE WRITING COURSE CRITERIA**


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- **WI Course employ writing as a method for deepening student learning.** All instructors of *Research Methods* employ both informal/low-impact writing along with formal writing expectations; expect iterative writing that addresses feedback on key assignments; and utilize such best practices as peer review and online written discussion.
- **Faculty provide feedback, on-going guidance, and clear expectations for “effective” written response.** All instructors of *Research Methods* incorporate iterative writing into major assignments and utilize feedback forms such as peer review, group conferences, and extensive modeling of expectations for written assignments. Given that a key product is a semester-long research project, the process is broken down into constituent parts that are manageable.
- **Writing accounts for 40-60 percent of the final grade.** All sections of *Research Methods* use writing-based assignments to account for a minimum of 40 percent of the final grade.
- **Students must complete at least 20 pages of writing.** The class assignments require a minimum of 10 pages of low-impact writing. The various components of the Research Project Portfolio require a minimum of 10 pages of formal writing. See section on Example Assignments for more detail.
- **WI courses should have a lower number of students in the 20-25 range.** SOC/ANT 316 is capped at 25 students and is usually taken during junior year.

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**EXAMPLES OF ASSIGNED READINGS**


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## TEXTBOOKS:

Neuman, *The Basics of Social Research Methods, Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, Third Edition*

## ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS:

Altorki, Soraya. (1988). At Home in the Field. In *Arab Women in the Field: Studying Your Own Society*. Soraya Altorki, Camillia Fawzi El-Solh (eds), Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988.

Anderson, Elijah. (1989). *Jelly's Place*. In *In the Field: Readings on the Field Research Experience*. Carolyn D. Smith & William Kornblum (eds.), New York: Praeger. pp. 9-19.

Becker, Howard S. (2007). *Telling About Society*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Beckwith, C., & Fisher, A. *African Ceremonies*. New York: Abrams.

Bloemraad, Irene. *Of Puzzles and Serendipity: Doing Cross-National, Mixed Method Immigration Research*. From *Researching Migration: Stories from the Field*, The Social Science Research Council, [http://www.ssrc.org/pubs/researching\\_migration.pdf](http://www.ssrc.org/pubs/researching_migration.pdf).

Bohannan, Paul. (1981). Unseen community: the natural history of a research project. IN *Anthropologists at Home in North America: Methods and Issues in the Study of One's Own Society*. Donald Messerschmidt (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 29-45.

Bosk, Charles. (1989). *The Fieldworker and the Surgeon*. In *In the Field: Readings on the Field Research Experience*. Carolyn D. Smith & William Kornblum (eds.), New York: Praeger. pp. 135-144.

Charmaz, Kathy. (2004). “Grounded Theory.” *Approaches to Qualitative Research: A Reader on Theory and Practice*. Edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy. NY: Oxford University Press. (pp. 496 - 521).

Emerson, Robert, Fretz, Rachel & Shaw, Linda. (2011). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Espiritu, Yen. “‘We Don’t Sleep around like White Girls Do’: Family, Culture, and Gender in Filipina American Lives,” *Signs* 26:2 (pp. 237-264)

Gladwell, Malcolm. (2008). *Outliers: The Story of Success*. New York: Little Brown and Company, 2008.

Hersker & Leap. (2008). Representation, Subjectivity and Ethics in Urban Gay Ethnography, *City and Society* 8(1): 142-147.

Horowitz, Ruth. (1989). *Getting In*. In *In the Field: Readings on the Field Research Experience*. Carolyn D. Smith & William Kornblum (eds.), New York: Praeger. pp. 45- 54.

Janesick, Valerie. (1994). “The dance of qualitative research design: metaphor, methodology, meaning.” In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (eds) Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln. London: Sage Publications. pp. 209-219.

Karp, David. (1981). *Speaking of Sadness: Depression, Disconnection, and the Meanings of Illness*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. Light, Linda & Nancy Kleiber. Interactive research in a feminist setting: The Vancouver Women’s Health Collective. IN *Anthropologists at Home in North America: Methods and Issues in the Study of One’s Own Society*. Donald Messerschmidt (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 167-182.

Keller, E. F. *A feeling for the organism: the life and work of Barbara McClintock*. New York: W. H. Freeman. Chapters 9, “A different language,” and Chapter 12, “A feeling for the organism.”

Marquez-Zenkov, Kristen. (2007). “Through city students’ eyes: urban students’ beliefs about school’s purposes, supports, and impediments” *Visual Studies* 22:2 (138-154)

Minocha, Aneeta. (1979). *Varied Roles in the Field: A Hospital in Delhi*. In *The Fieldworker and the Field*. M. N. Srinivas, et.al. (eds.), Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp. 201-215.

Nathan, Rebekah. (2005). *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*. Penguin Books.

Punch, M. (1994). “Politics and ethics in qualitative research.” In Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S., eds., *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 83-97.

Purser, Gretchen, Amy Schalet, Ofer Sharone. (2011). *Berkley’s Betrayal: Wages and Working Conditions at CAL*. [www.berkeleybetrayal.org](http://www.berkeleybetrayal.org).

Robinson, R. A. (2005). “‘Crystal virtues’: Seeking reconciliation between ideals and violations of girlhood.” *Contemporary Justice Review* 8(1).

Robinson. (1994). Private Pain and Public Behaviors: Sexual Abuse and Delinquent Girls. In Riessman, Ed., *Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research*.

Rosenblum, B. (1990). “Becoming an arty sociologist.” In Berger, B. M., ed., *Authors of their own lives: intellectual biographies by twenty sociologists*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. 285-297.

Rubin, Lillian. (1994). *Families on the fault line*. New York: Harper Collins. Introduction, pp. 3-27.

Schemo, Diana Jean. “What a Professor Learned as an Undercover Freshman” *The New York Times*. August 23, 2006

Sheehan, Susan. “Not Poor Enough: Cassie Stromer’s Old Age.” *The New Yorker*. October 25, 2004.

Sirin, Selcuk & Michelle Fine. (2007). *Hyphenated Selves: Muslim American Youth Negotiating Identities on the Fault Lines of Global Conflict*. *Applied Development Science* 11(3). 151-163.

Tolman, Deborah. (1994). "Doing Desire: Adolescent Girls' Struggles for/with Sexuality." *Gender & Society*. 8:3 (pp. 324-342)

Weiss, Robert S. (1994). *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press, 1994.

Withorn, A. (1986). "For better or for worse: Women against women in the welfare state." In Lefkowitz, R. & Withorn, A., Eds. *For crying out loud: Women and poverty in the United States*.

Wright, W. (1992). *Wild knowledge: science, language, and social life in a fragile environment*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. Chapter 2, "Belief systems."

Venkatesh, Suhrir. (2008). *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*. London, Penguin Press.

## EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

### **Class Assignments:**

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Short 2-3 page weekly assignments on course readings or short projects that are designed to help student understand and master the material as well as facilitate productive class discussions.

### **US Intermediate Writing Learning Goal**

- Read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate written work in discipline-specific contexts

### **Example I:**

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1. **Read Neuman, Chapter 5 (113-120) Chapter 9 (238-249); Chapter 11 AND Weiss, “Learning from strangers.”** Write out notes on key points and at least 3 questions you have about the material.
2. **Read Karp, *Speaking of Sadness: Depression, Disconnection and the Meanings of Illness*, chapter 2 “The Dialectics of Depression.** Reflect on the following:
  - a. What did he find out through his interviews? What kinds of relationships did he have with the people he interviewed? What did you think of the nature of his data?
  - b. Why do you think he opted for a qualitative approach?

### **Example II:**

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**Read:** Neuman Chapter 3  
Hersker and Leap, “Representation, Subjectivity and Ethics in Urban Gay Ethnography”  
Bosk, “The Fieldworker and the Surgeon”  
Nathan, “My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student”  
AAA Code of Ethics

**Use the readings to reflect on the following questions.** Be sure to answer the questions thoughtfully, clearly, and completely.

1. What are the key aspects of – according to sociologists and anthropologists – conducting ethical research?
2. What are the ethical dilemmas that Bosk faced in conducting his research? Would you have resolved them in the same way?
3. What ethical dilemmas do Hersker and Leap face in their research? How do they resolve tensions between being a researcher and a member of the community they are studying?
4. How did Nathan conduct her research? What do you think about how she handled the ethical considerations?
5. Think about your own research project and identify a potential ethical dilemma you might encounter. Use your imagination and elaborate a possible scenario – and explain how you would solve the dilemma.

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**Research Project Portfolio: Literature Review**

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**US Intermediate Writing Learning Goal**

- Demonstrate intermediate information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.
- Read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate written work in discipline-specific contexts

**Example:**

For this assignment you will each be completing a literature review related to the topic you have chosen for your group research project. Each research team member should choose a DIFFERENT ANGLE to explore your research topic. You will need to locate and review at least 3 academic journal articles on your topic and write a 3-5 page literature review on the articles you've selected.

A literature review is a critical, integrated account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. It is a review of the literature directly related to the topic or problem under study, followed by an explanation of how your research question grows out of that review, showing how you identify your own research focus in relationship to previous research. The purpose of the literature review is to know what others have discovered before you begin your investigation of your own, to ground your study in a particular context of what is known about a subject in order to establish a foundation for the topic being researched.

**ORGANIZATION of ESSAY:**

**INTRODUCTION:** In the introduction, you should:

- Define or identify the general topic, issue, or area of concern, thus providing an appropriate context for reviewing the literature.
- Point out overall trends in what has been published about the topic; or conflicts in theory, methodology, evidence, and conclusions; or gaps in research and scholarship; or a single problem or new perspective of immediate interest.
- Establish your reason (point of view) for reviewing the literature; explain the criteria to be used in analyzing and comparing literature and the organization of the review (sequence); and, when necessary, state why certain literature is or is not included (scope).

**THE BODY:** In the body, you should:

- Organize research studies according to common factors such as similar research questions, common findings, qualitative versus quantitative approaches, etc.
- Summarize individual studies or articles with as much or as little detail as each merits according to its comparative importance in the literature, remembering that space (length) denotes significance.
- Provide the reader with strong "umbrella" sentences at beginnings of paragraphs, "signposts" throughout, and brief "so what" summary sentences at intermediate points in the review to aid in understanding comparisons and analyses.

**CONCLUSION:** In the conclusion, you should:

- Summarize major contributions of significant studies and articles to the body of knowledge under review, maintaining the focus established in the introduction.
- Evaluate the current "state of the art" for the body of knowledge reviewed, pointing out major methodological flaws or gaps in research, inconsistencies in theory and findings, and areas or issues pertinent to future study.
- Consider some key insights that you would like to explore in your research to contribute to the larger area of study.

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**Research Project Portfolio: Final Report/Data Analysis**

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**US Intermediate Writing Learning Goal**

- Demonstrate rhetorically effective, discipline-specific writing for appropriate audiences
- Demonstrate, at an advanced level of competence, use of discipline-specific control of language, modes of development and formal conventions
- Demonstrate intermediate information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.

**Example:**

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**Final Paper:** write an 8-10 page research paper based on your group research project. You will need to have a clear primary claim/thesis statement related to your research project that will serve as the focus for your paper. You are expected to engage this paper based on the research that you have done with your group over the course of the semester. Address the following areas:

1. **Introduction.** This should include a context for your paper, including the research question your work addresses. Please be sure to write this as though a person completely unfamiliar with your topic will understand what is to follow. Please state your research question(s) clearly. You should also be very specific about what part of the research question your contribution addresses.
  2. **Literature review.** Please use my comments on your literature review to edit and revise for the final paper. Please repeat the portion of the literature that your paper will address.
  3. **Methodology.** Please describe in detail the method(s) you chose to do this research, and the process—in detail—you used to proceed with the methodology. This section should include conceptual and operational definitions, variable construction including the values for each variable and how you arrived at each, administration of survey, what considerations you made for human subjects protection. Please address potential risks and benefits to your subjects, and your efforts to inform them of each. If you were able to conduct a field exercise, or other qualitative method, please describe what you did. If you did not do a qualitative method, please describe what you could add for deep inquiry into your research questions. Finally, in this section you should mention any special challenges or obstacles to your data collection.
  4. **Findings.** What does your research tell you, and us? You should show, from the variables in your survey questions, at least frequencies and measures of central tendency. To enhance this section, please use tables or other figures of quantitative data display, e.g., graph, scattergram, or other figure (consult Neuman text).
  5. **Discussion and implications for the field.** Pull together your findings into a coherent discussion of what your new knowledge contributes to the research question, and to the field of literature you reviewed for your question. Synthesize your findings into a clear statement of why your findings matter—answer the question: So what? Remember, a university administrator with the resources to put your research to use will be there, and he really is interested in new information that can enhance student life. Suggest what you think your findings have for changes to current policy or practice, and what further research in your area needs to be done, given what you have found.
  6. **Reflection on Research process.** Discuss your reflections on the research process, what you learned, what was challenging, what was surprising, what continues to puzzle you about the process, etc.
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**SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE**

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**Week 1:**

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- ❖ *How does social science research help us make sense of our social worlds?*
  - ❖ *What is social science research? How is social science different from other ways of understanding the human condition?*
  - ❖ *Why should we bother doing social science research – what difference does it make?*
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**Week 2:**

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- ❖ *What are “good” research questions and how do we develop them?*
  - ❖ *How do we develop research designs that will answer our questions?*
  - ❖ *How do researchers take into account their social backgrounds?*
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Neuman, chp 1 – *Doing Social Research*  
 Becker, chp 1 – *Telling about Society*  
 Becker, chp 2 – *Representations of Society as Organizational Products*  
 Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, chp. 1  
 Purser, Schalet, Sharone, *Berkley’s Betrayal: Wages and Working Condition*

**Week 3**

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- ❖ *How do social scientists build on existing knowledge?*
  - ❖ *How do we transform research questions into doable projects?*
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Neuman, chp 4 – *Reviewing the Scholarly Literature & Planning a Study* (72-94)  
 Bohannan, *Unseen community: the natural history of a research project*  
 Bloemraad, *Of Puzzels and Serendipity: Doing Cross-National, Mixed Method Immigration Research*  
 Minocha, *Varied Roles in the Field: A Hospital in Delhi*

**Week 4**

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- ❖ *How can we best use qualitative methods to help discover and answer our research questions?*
  - ❖ *How do we identify a research site, define our research population, and gain access for qualitative research?*
  - ❖ *How do we collect data through qualitative methods such as field observation, interviews, focus groups, and visual analysis?*
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Neuman chp 5 Quantitative and Qualitative Measurement (113-120)  
 Karp, *Speaking of Sadness: Depression, Disconnection, and the Meanings of Illness*,  
 Chp 2 “The Dialectics of Depression”  
 Weiss, *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*,  
 Chp 1  
 Neuman chp 6 Sampling (146-151)  
 Neuman, chp 9 (238-249) – *Nonreactive Research and Secondary Analysis*  
 Neuman, chp 11 – *Field Research*  
 Janesick, “The dance of qualitative research design: metaphor, methodolotry, meaning”

**Week 5**

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- ❖ *What ethical principals guide social scientific research?*
  - ❖ *How do we address real-life ethical dilemmas in our research?*
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Neuman, chp 3 – *Ethics in Social Research*  
 American Anthropological Association code of ethics  
 Bosk, *The Fieldworker and the Surgeon*  
 Hersker & Leap, *Representation, Subjectivity & Ethics in Urban Gay Ethnography*  
 Nathan, “Afterword: Ethics and Ethnography,” *My Freshman Year: What a professor learned by becoming a student*

**Week 6**

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- ❖ *How do we discover patterns and draw conclusions from extensive qualitative data?*



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- ❖ *How do researchers organize large amounts of data into compelling findings?*
  - ❖ *What are the key aspects, strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research?*
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Neuman, chp 13 – *Analysis of Qualitative Data*

### Week 7

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- ❖ *How do key theoretical paradigms in social science?*
  - ❖ *How does sociological theory relate to research?*
  - ❖ *What are central arguments about the nature of “facts” and “objectivity” and how do they shape research strategies?*
  - ❖ *How do we take into account the influence of our social backgrounds on our research?*
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Neuman, chp 2 – *Theory and Social Research*

Light & Kleiber, *Interactive research in a feminist setting: The Vancouver Women’s Health Collective*

Horowitz, *Getting In*

Anderson, *Jelly’s Place*

Venkatesh, *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*, chps 1 & 2

### Week 8

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- ❖ *How can we use quantitative methodologies like surveys to help answer our research question?*
  - ❖ *How do researchers organize their thinking through the use of hypotheses and variables?*
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Neuman, chp 4 – *Reviewing the Scholarly Literature & Planning a Study* (95-111)

### Week 9

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- ❖ *What are key differences between qualitative vs. quantitative research approaches?*
  - ❖ *How can we effectively integrate the use of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies?*
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Sirin & Fine, *Hyphenated Selves: Muslim American Youth Negotiating Identities on the Fault Lines of Global Conflict*

### Week 10

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- ❖ *How do we develop a survey that will provide high-quality data?*
  - ❖ *What are the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative research?*
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Neuman, chp 7 – *Survey Research*

### Week 11

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- ❖ *What are some of the difficulties in constructing a good survey instrument?*
  - ❖ *What’s the difference between interview and survey data?*
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### Week 12

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- ❖ *How do we identify a research population in quantitative research?*
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### Week 13

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- ❖ *How do we analyze extensive quantitative data in order to answer our research questions?*
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Neuman, chp 10 – *Analysis of Quantitative Data*

### Week 14

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- ❖ *How can we effectively communicate our research findings to different audiences?*
  - ❖ *Why is research important – what can social science research contribute to improving the world around us?*
  - ❖ *What are the implications of our research findings*
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Neuman, chp 14 – *Writing a Research Report*

### Finals Week

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Project Presentations